

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
DEAE-00 IO-13 JUSE-00 CTME-00 SNM-05 TRSE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4844
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PEPR OTRA PBOR SNAR TH BM
SUBJECT: VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK TO BURMA

REF: BANGKOK 14230

1. BEGIN LOU: SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT PACHARIYANGKUN, IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE NATION (A LOCAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER) MAY 18, 1978, GAVE A SOMEWHAT MORE OPTIMISTIC APPRAISAL OF THAI-BURMESE RELATIONS AND OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF PM KRIANGSAK'S RECENT TRIP TO BURMA THAN DID ANOTHER RTG OFFICIAL WHO ALSO ACCOMPANIED PM KRIANGSAK TO BURMA (SEE BANGKOK 14230), UPPADIT TERMED THE BURMESE ATTITUDE DURING THE RECENT VISIT "VERY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RESPONSIVE" AND CONTRASTED IT WITH THE MORE CAUTIOUS ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING THE VISIT OF THEN DEPUTY SUPREME COMMANDER GEN. KRIANGSAK TO BURMA IN JANUARY, 1977. ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT, THE MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED DURING THE LATEST VISIT WERE BURMESE MINORITY REBELS OPERATING FROM THAILAND, THE THAI PROPOSAL TO REVIVE THE LONG MORIBUND THAI-BURMA BORDER COMMITTEE, NARCOTICS, TRADE RELATIONS, AND THE CURRENT STATUS OF THAI FISHERMEN IN

BURMESE JAILS. THE BURMESE WERE REPORTEDLY UNENTHUSIASTIC REGARDING REACTIVATION OF THE THAI-BURMA BORDER COMMITTEE. ON NARCOTICS, THAILAND PROPOSED GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO WIPE OUT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN THE "GOLDEN TRIANGLE." THE THAIS ALSO OFFERED TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON CROP SUBSTITUTION EFFORTS AND TO SEND THAI SOLDIERS AND POLICE TO ASSIST IN THE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CAMPAIGN ALONG THE THAI-BURMESE BORDER. THE BURMESE POLITELY DECLINED THE LATTER OFFER OF ASSISTANCE. THE THAI AND THE BURMESE, HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY ARRIVED AT A VERBAL AGREEMENT CONCERNING A HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION IN THE JOINT FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS. END SUMMARY. END LOU.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. TEXT, AS APPEARS IN THE NATION, FOLLOWS. ACTIONS, TIMING MAKE KRIANGSAK VISIT TO RANGOON A BIG SUCCESS -- FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT PACHARIYANGKUN SAYS HE COULD SENSE A VERY RESPONSIVE ATTITUDE FROM THE BURMESE LEADERSHIP DURING THE MAY 13-14 VISIT MADE BY PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK CHOMANAN.

2. MR UPADIT WAS IN BURMA WITH GEN. KRIANGSAK BEFORE, IN JANUARY 1977. AT THE TIME GEN. KRIANGSAK WAS VISITING BURMA IN HIS CAPACITY AS DEPUTY SUPREME COMMANDER.

3. "DURING THAT FIRST VISIT, WE MADE SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS. THE BURMESE SIDE SAID THEY WOULD TAKE THEM INTO CONSIDERATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT THERE WAS SCARECELY ANY PROGRESS," MR UPADIT SAID.

4. THE ATMOSPHERE TOOK A NEW TURN THIS TIME WHEN PREMIER KRIANGSAK, PURSUING HIS NEW LINE OF LIBERAL FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE NEIGHBORS, PLUNGED INTO DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH BURMESE PRIME MINISTER MAUNG MAUNG KHA FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS.

5. "THIS TIME I COULD CONFIDENTLY DESCRIBE THE VISIT AS SUCCESSFUL SINCE MOST OF OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOINT EFFORTS IN A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES WERE ACCEPTED ALMOST ON THE SPOT," THE MINISTER SAID.

6. THE MOST CRUCIAL ISSUE WAS, OF COURSE, THE PRESENCE OF SOME BURMESE MINORITY REBELS ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER.

7. "THIS IS A THORNY ISSUE. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN SAID THAT IF WE COULD OVERCOME THAT PROBLEM, ANY OTHER ISSUE COULD BE SETTLED WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY," THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID.

8. THE WAY MR UPADIT EXPLAINED IT, DISCUSSIONS ON THIS ISSUE WERE SATISFACTORY.

9. "BEFORE THIS ISSUE WAS THE MAIN PROBLEM WHICH STRAINED OUR RELATIONSHIP. THEY SUSPECTED THAT SOME OF OUR OFFICIALS MIGHT HAVE BACKED THE REBELS WHO WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE USED THE THAI SOIL TO STAGE THEIR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT," HE SAID.

10. PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK MADE IT PLAIN TO THE BURMESE LEADER THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S NEW POLICY IS TO DENY THE BURMESE REBELS OF SUCH SANCTUARIES AND THAT THAILAND IS SINCERE IN PUTTING INTO EFFECT THIS POLICY.

11. "THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THREE BIG REBEL GROUPS: THE GROUP LED BY U TWIN, FRIEND OF FORMER BURMESE PREMIER U NU AND THE KAREN REBELS WHO HAVE ALWAYS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEEN TARGET OF SUSPICION OF THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT. BUT THE MOST DANGEROUS ELEMENTS IN THE EYES OF THE PRESENT RANGOON GOVERNMENT IS THE KHUN SA GROUP WHICH IS KNOWN TO HAVE CONDUCTED ILLEGAL TRADE IN JADE AND SMUGGLING OF DRUGS AND OPIUM," FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT EXPLAINED.

12. PREMIER KRIANGSAK HAD APPARENTLY TIMED THE BURMA VISIT PROPERLY. JUST ABOUT ONE WEEK BEFORE HE WENT TO RANGOON, AN INSTRUCTION WENT OUT TO GET KHUN SA AND HIS MEN OUT OF BAAN HIN TAEK, AMPHOE MAE CHAN OF CHIANG RAI PROVINCE.

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13. JUST AS HE WAS TLAKING THIS ISSUE WITH THE
BURMESE PREMIER, MILITARY AUTHORITIES FLEW A LARGE
GROUP OF THAI AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS TO BAAN HIN TAEK
TO SHOW THEM THE DESERTED CAMPS OF KHUN SA.

14. ARMED FORCES CHIEF-OF-STAFF GEN. CHAROEN PONGPANIJ
SAID EARLIER THIS WEEK THAT ALL OF KHUN SA'S MEN HAD
BEEN MOVED OUT,-EXCEPT FOR SOME 600 PEOPLE WHO WERE
NOT DIRECTLY LINKED WITH HIM. THEY ARE MOSTLY THAIS
WHO WOULD RATHER STAY HERE THAN BE FORCED BACK.

15. "PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK BROUGHT UP THE
EVACUATION OF KHUN SA TO PROVE TO THE BURMESE
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PREMIER THAT THAILAND IS SERIOUS ABOUT DENYING THESE
REBELS THAI SANCTUARIES," MINISTER UPADIT SAID.

16. THE BURMESE LEADER, MR. UPADIT SAID, SEEMED
TO GET THE MESSAGE.

17. ONCE THE BASIC ASSURANCE WAS GIVEN, THE THAI
SIDE WAS KEEN TO FOLLOW UP THE TALKS WITH THE
REVIVAL OF THE LONG MORIBUND BORDER COMMITTEE SO THAT
ANY POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING OR BORDER CONFLICTS
COULD BE THRASHED OUT ON THE SPOT BEFORE THEY GOT
OUT OF CONTROL.

18. THE BURMESE LEADER DID NOT RESPOND TOO
ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO THE PROPOSAL TO REVIVE THE
COMMITTEE WHICH WAS FORMED IN 1962 AND HAD BECOME
VIRTUALLY INACTIVE IN THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

19. "WHEN THEY DID NOT SHOW ANY INTEREST IN OUR ORIGINAL
PROPOSAL, PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK SUGGESTED THAT SOMEHOW
THERE SHOULD BE A POINT OF CONTACT OR POINT OF COORDINATION
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES," UPADIT SAID.

20. BURMESE PREMIER MAUNG MAUNG KHA DISPLAYED INTEREST IN THAT NEW RECOMMENDATION.

21. "HE SUGGESTED THAT SUCH CONTACTS SHOULD BE ON AN AD HOC BASIS WHENEVER A CONFLICT ARISES," HE SAID.

22. THE TWO LEADERS THEN AGREED THAT THE POINT OF CONTACT" WOULD BE AT TWO LEVELS. ON CIVILIAN AFFAIRS, RESPECTIVE PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES WOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER WHILE MILITARY AFFAIRS WOULD BE HANDLED BY COMMANDERS OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RESPECTIVE REGIONAL COMMANDS.

23. SHOULD THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO HAVE THE BORDER CONFLICT RESOLVED AT ANY PARTICULAR LEVEL, FOREIGN MINISTERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD STEP IN.

24. "THIS IS A BIG STEP FORWARD," MR. UPADIT SAID. THE DISCUSSIONS THEN TOUCHED ON ANOTHER CRUCIAL TOPIC: NARCOTICS.

25. GEN. KRIANGSAK TOLD U MAUNG MAUNG KHA THAT WORLD ATTENTION IS NOW FOCUSSING ON THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE AND THAILAND "MEANS BUSINESS"WHEN IT SAYS IT IS DETERMINED TO WIPE OUT DRUG TRAFFICKING.

26. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT OPIUM USUALLY COMES FROM THE BURMESE SIDE TOO WHERE DRUG-PRODUCING CHEMICALS ARE SMUGGLED IN FROM THE THAI SIDE.

27. "IF BOTH GOVERNMENTS JOIN HANDS IN SUPPRESSING THE TWO ELEMENTS, BACKBONE OF THE HEROIN TRADE WOULD BE BROKEN, " MR. UPADIT QUOTED GEN. KRIANGSAK AS HAVING TOLD THE BURMESE PREMIER.

28. U MAUNG MAUNG KHA REPLIED BY EEXPLAINING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN LAUNCHING A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN AGAINST DRUG PRODUCTION BY DESTROYING A LARGE NUMBER OF DRUG FACTORIES IN THE BORDER AREAS IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. IT WAS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT HAD SUCCESSFULLY TURNED 4,000 ACRES OF POPPY FIELDS INTO SUBSTITUTION CROPS.

29. "WE TOLD THE BURMESE THAT WE TOO HAD BEEN QUITE SUCCESSFUL WITH OUR EXPERIMENT WITH SUBSTITUTION CROPS. AND WE ARE READY TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON THAT," THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID.

30. WHEN THE THAI SIDE PROPOSED SENDING SOLDIERS AND POLICEMEN TO HELP IN THE SUPPRESSION DRIVE ALONG THE COMMON BORDER, THE BURMESE LEADER PROMPTLY SIAD: "THANK YOU BUT NO." LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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31. U MAUNG MAUNG KHA EXPLAINED THAT EVEN WHEN THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO SEND TROOPS AND POLICEMEN TO COMBAT THE DRUG TRAFFICKERS, "WE USUALLY SEND THEM FROM RANGOON AND WE DON'T USE THOSE STATIONED NEAR THE BORDER."

32 GEN. KRIANGSAK APPEARED TO APPRECIATE THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE BURMESE LINE OF THINKING. HE DID NOT PURSUE THE ISSUE.

33. THE TWO LEADERS, HOWEVER, ARRIVED AT A VERBAL AGREEMENT THAT SOME KIND OF HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGE WOULD BE WORKED OUT TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS.

34. WHEN THE QUESTION OF TRADE RELATIONS WAS RAISED, THERE WERE NO MAJOR DISAGGREEMENTS. THAILAND WANTS TO BUY TIMBER AND TEAK AS WELL AS MARINE PRODUCTS FROM BURMA WHICH MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING SOME ITEMS FROM THAILAND.

35. MR. UPADIT WAS GLAD TO HEAR THE BURMESE PREMIER SAY THAT HE WILL SEND A TRADE MISSION TO THAILAND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

36. "WE POINTED OUT QUITE VIVIDLY THAT IF WE COULD ESTABLISH PROPER OFFICIAL TRADE RELATION, SMUGGLING COULD BE CURBED. AS EVERYBODY REALIZES, SMUGGLING IS ONE OF THE MAJOR SOURCES OF INCOME FOR THE BURMESE REBELS,"MR. UPADIT SAID.

37. THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD LEARNED FROM HIS PREVIOUS VISIT THAT BURMA WAS NOT INTERESTED IN ANY WAY IN FORMING A JOINT FISHING VENTURE WITH THAILAND.

38. SO, THE QUESTION WAS NOT RAISED DURING THE LAST VISIT.

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39. "PERHAPS, SOME TEN YEARS AGO, SOME CHINESE MERCHANTS FROM THAILAND HAD A JOINT FISHING VENTURE WITH THE BURMESE WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE A SOUR JOINT EFFORT, MR. UPADIT SAID.

40. THAILAND EXPLAINED, HOWEVER, THAT SINCE THAILAND IS TO HAVE JOINT FISHING VENTURES WITH INDIA AND BANGLADESH, THAI FISHERMEN HEADING FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES MAY HAVE TO SEEK LENIENCY IN PASSING THROUGH BURMA'S 200-MILE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE.

41. "THAT REQUEST WENT DOWN WELL, APPARENTLY," MR. UPADIT SAID.

42. THERE WAS NO DIRECT REQUEST FROM PREMIER KRIANGSAK TO HIS

BURMESE COUNTERPART TO RELEASE ALL THE THAI FISHERMEN IN BURMESE
JAILS OUTRIGHT.

43. "ALL WE ASKED WAS THAT THE LEGAL PROCEDURES AGAINST THOSE
THAI FISHERMEN WHO WERE FOUND TO HAVE ACTUALLY VIOLATED BURMESE
LAWS BE SPEEDED UP SO THAT JUSTICE COULD BE ACCORDED THEM,
MR. UPADIT SAID.

44. "TO THAT REQUEST TOO, THE BURMESE LEADER WAS UNDERSTANDING,"
THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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